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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to show the significance of the educational reforms of women's higher education during the U.S. occupation of post-World War II Japan. To help fill the gap of research on women's higher education in Japan, focus is on an historical analysis of women's higher education reform policies. Since educational reforms are not one-dimensional, the paper analyzes the educational reform policies of women's higher education through the use of an assortment of historical materials. It examines the installment of the single-track system and its influence on women's higher education through primary and secondary sources. It calls for further research to shed more light on the reality of the postwar educational reforms in women's higher education while comparing them to the prewar system that was immersed in a rigid cultural setting. (Contains 26 references and 5 notes.) (BT)

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# Democratic Reforms and Women's Higher Education during the U.S. Occupation of Japan, 1945-1952

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It is widely agreed that one of Japan's major educational reforms was enacted during the United States Occupation of Japan from 1945 to 1952 in a relatively short period of time, when major drastic political, social, and educational reforms were developed and implemented. Some scholars believe that reforms were implemented through the strong direction of the Occupation Forces, while others emphasize the strength of Japanese initiatives. It would be short-sighted to assert that there is one correct view because each dimension of the educational reforms had different aspects and exerted different influences, and it is even possible to find some commonality between the two positions. Nevertheless, it is the express purpose of this paper is to show the significance of the educational reforms of women's higher education during the U.S. Occupation of post World War II Japan.

While there are a relatively large number of studies on educational reforms, published research studies dealing with women's higher education in particular are scarce, and discussions concerning educational reform that are directly related to women's higher education from 1945 to 1952 are even more limited. To help fill this gap, my focus will be on a historical analysis of women's higher education reform policies. Since educational reforms are not one-dimensional, I will analyze the educational reform policies of women's higher education through the use of an assortment of historical materials.

Prior to the reforms, clearly Japan had a history of being a closed society. In some sense the geographic environment helped to shape the social, economic, and cultural life of Japan. Japan is a series of islands which together are approximately the size of California. The society is highly homogeneous, and cultural characteristics such

as strong group orientation and harmony in social relations are highly valued (Beauchamp, 1992). As a result, pre-World War II Japan went though a unique modernization process and developed its educational system accordingly. The educational system was based on an elite power structure and centralized system under the Ministry of Education's authority. Moreover, Japan possessed a traditional and rather rigid cultural system. The educational system in prewar Japan rooted in Japanese traditional values significantly limited women's public and private lives, however indirect that may have been. Clearly, the prewar government viewed education as merely a stepping stone toward the firm establishment of national moral standards with emphasis on service to the state.

The system was firmly incorporated into other systems, such as economic structures, corporate culture, the production and maintenance of elitism, and gender distinctions. Particularly after the Japanese military government entered the China War and WWII, including the Pacific War, the nation only had access to very limited ideologies. During the war years, 1931 - 1945, military drill and an ultra-nationalistic ideology became dominant in Japanese culture and directly influenced education policies. Consequently, only a narrow range of behaviors and ideas were accepted in schools. Additionally, the nation demanded absolute submission and blind loyalty to the State. In the end, the educational system provided submissive manpower conductive to the national war efforts.

Japan entered WWII against the US after attacking Pearl Harbor, December 1941. Japanese troops expanded their force into Asian countries such as the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia. The US Navy counterattacked and during the

Battle of the Midway US troops landed on Okinawa, the southern islands of Japan, in April 1945. US aircrafts dropped bombs and destroyed major Japanese cities; most notably Hiroshima and Nagasaki were devastated by atomic bombs on August 6 and 9, 1945, respectively. After a long and costly war, in terms of human lives and resources on both sides, Emperor Hirohito agreed to an unconditional surrender as called for in the Potsdam Declaration[1]. The Emperor subsequently announced his decision to the nation during a radio address on August 15, 1945. Statements in the Potsdam Declaration made demands such as a near unconditional surrender, the reforms of democratization and the installment of a liberal ideology.

The Japanese people were essentially exhausted from the effects of the long war years. The social, political, and educational systems were in disarray. Ideology and beliefs held so strongly during the war came under criticism of revision. US democracy was introduced as a way of transforming Japanese thinking from the militaristic and ultra-nationalistic views held during the war years. General Douglas MacArthur, who was appointed Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), was eager to reform Japanese society along democratic lines, and his influence was extremely important (Borton, 1967; Nishi, 1982; Pharr, 1998). The Japanese government and MacArthur's General Headquarters of the SCAP in Tokyo engaged in a negotiated process regarding every issue. The General Headquarters had its own agenda for postwar Japan's reform that ran basically along democratic lines.

Educational reform seemed necessary in order to carry out any overall reform. Beauchamp (1995) stated that, "Education....was now to be used to achieve the goals

[1] The Potsdam Declaration set the terms of the unconditional surrender of Japan that were laid down in July 26, 1945 among the Allied countries (Beauchamp, 1987).

of democratization, demilitarization, decentralization, and, thus, the creation of a peaceful and democratic society" (p. 71). Accordingly, educational reforms were carried out along those political lines. The US Occupation policy toward Japanese education was based on the Potsdam Declaration (1945) which specifically called for "the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people." Democratization was an essential policy change necessary to accomplish educational reform at all levels, including women's higher education. The American headquarters believed that educational reform would best be carried out in cooperation with the Japanese government based on liberal ideas and democratization. The Civil Information and Education Section (CI&E) of the SCAP was arranged to conduct reforms in education, religion, culture, and information. The main function of the Education Division of the CI&E was to execute educational reform to effectively democratize the country. American military officer Captain Eileen Donovan was appointed as an advisor to specifically conduct women's educational reform. Yet educational reforms of women's higher education were inevitably tied to politics. Since it was hoped that the reforms would be carried out through cooperation, Lieutenant Commander (Lt. Cmdr) Robert King Hall a chief of the Education Sub-Section in CI&E of SCAP prepared a request for the Japanese government to form the Japanese Education Committee in the Cabinet to be formed according to a plan developed in February 1946 (Oa, 1993). Additionally, SCAP planned to send a group of American educators to Japan anticipating that the Japanese Education Committee would be a counterpart.

The occupation policies focused upon discontinuing autocratic prewar Japanese social and political systems, and upon the educational reform policies first attempted in

the earlier prewar educational system. Of course the Japanese and American sides had considerably different views about what kind of reforms should be implemented, and it seemed that there was not a clear consensus among the people who were involved with Japan's reforms. While many reforms were carried out, there were series of disputes between the CI&E and some Japanese conservatives.

In the prewar period, women generally were expected to stay close to the traditional maximum of "To be a good wife and wise mother." This ideology dominated prewar Japanese society and, to some extent, even continues to be a strong ideological mainstay in contemporary Japanese society. The male-dominated society did not expect women to develop their intellect and their "personalities" through higher education; accordingly, education of women, the ideology underlying the "educating women" developed a more narrow meaning within the conservative context of "educating a future wife and mother."

There were three major tendencies in women's higher education during the prewar period: 1) government-based higher normal schools, 2) private professional schools, and 3) private liberal arts schools. Christian missionaries also contributed to women's higher education. Female students in higher education during the prewar years came from relatively higher social classes while higher education was uncommon among the majority of women. The imperial universities and private male colleges did not allow women to enter except for a few cases; nevertheless, a small number of women who were strongly motivated to acquire higher education did so, and many of them contributed to the field of women's education as school teachers.

In October 1946, General MacArthur started to take leadership immediately after arriving in Japan. One of these reforms was the establishment of women's right to participate in Japan's political and educational systems. In order to achieve these goals, women's education reforms would have to be closely considered. In May1946, the Ministry of Education published a "Guide to New Education in Japan *(Shinkyoiku Shishin)*" (Terasaki, 2000b)[2] which included directions to be taken in the postwar education of Japan. In this publication, the Ministry of Education emphasized the importance of the improvement of women's education. In particular, women's education for individual happiness and well-being was enthusiastically supported while criticism was made of prewar society. Lt. R. K. Hall urged that a group of American educators assist and advise the Civil Information and Education Section of SCAP. Preparation started in October, 1945, and SCAP officially requested that the War Department make the invitation in January, 1946. Serving as chairman was the president of the University of Illinois, Dr. George D. Stoddard, and twenty-six other American educators were selected and arrived in Tokyo in March, 1947. The Japanese Education Committee welcomed them as a counterpart (Terasaki, 2000a).

Early on the SCAP Headquarters seemed eager to install a single-track system (6-year elementary, 3-year junior high, 3-year high school, and 4-year college and university) (6-3-3-4) instead of the multi-track system used in prewar Japan[3]. As a result of research of Japan prior to the surrender, the Occupation authorities realized they would have to decide on a new educational system that would seek to remake

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[2] Originally two volumes were published both in Japanese and in English in 1946.

[3] Institutions of higher education in prewar Japan, such as the seven Imperial universities, higher schools, the government-based higher normal schools (men and women), and colleges *(Senmon Gakko)*, had separate and unequal administration. The Imperial universities were held in high esteem. Each institution played its role in accord with its specific purpose for the State's benefit.

Japanese society initially by creating more equal opportunity. The CI&E had primary responsibility to convey the occupation authorities' wishes and to achieve this goal. The US Education Mission visited Japan in March 1946 and made reports to SCAP and recommendations to the Japanese Education Committee. Lulu H. Holmes, Dean of Women at the State College of Washington, was invited to take the post of advisor on women's higher education to SCAP in Tokyo at the USEM's suggestion. She worked from July 1946 to April 1948, after which Helen Hosp took over, holding the position from July 1948 to March 1950.

Captain Eileen Donovan, another advisor for women's education in the CI&E, believed strongly that the 6-3-3-4 plan would solve many of the problems of female education. She mentioned in a memorandum to Major Mark Orr in June 6, 1946 that "Rather than a reform of girls high schools, domestic science schools, commercial schools, specialized and vocational schools per se, the amalgamation of such schools including the abolition of the middle schools for boys per se, and the introduction of coeducation through the secondary level would go far toward eliminating the girls problem as a specialized one" (Satow, Suzuki, & Tsuchimochi, 1990). This reform would give every woman an opportunity to enroll in school. The USEM suggested the expansion of educational opportunities for all women.

Pressure to achieve this goal was especially sharp within the Japanese Education Committee; the USEM's report had a powerful influence on this Committee. It was as if the "recommendations" the USEM made were commands. Discussions concerning the installment of the 6-3-3-4 system began in the Japanese Education Committee meetings in September 1946, but only after the USEM left Japan (Nihon

Kindai Kyoiku Shiryo Kenkyukai, 1995). The USEM enthusiastically suggested simplifying the educational structure so that more equal opportunity for education would be granted (Beauchamp, 1987; Terasaki, 2000a). It meant that females would finally be given educational opportunities somewhat similar to those of males. The Japanese Education Committee quickly resolved to implement a plan for 9-year compulsory education (6-years of elementary school and 3-years of lower secondary education); however, it was more difficult and they took more time to reach a conclusion on reforms for upper secondary and higher education.

This structural reform based on the SCAP's initiative demanded that the Japanese Education Committee determine the future direction of Japanese higher education away from merely creating social elites by giving privileges and advantages to a small number of selected people and training people for specific occupations (Nihon Kindai Kyoiku Shiryo Kenkyukai, 1995).

Even though the Japanese Education Committee had reservations about the single-track higher education system, they acknowledged that the prewar multi-track higher education system had the effect of creating privileged and under-privilege people. The Committee also realized that the SCAP's agreement could only be obtained through great effort. Despite all their efforts to maintain the old system, the SCAP's demand was too powerful to resist, and the Japanese Education Committee gradually agreed to simplify higher education institutions.

To simplify institutions of higher education, L. H. Holmes, an advisor of women's higher education of SCAP, contributed to the establishment of the University Accreditation Association and encouraged promoting women's colleges. "New-system

universities" including five women's colleges were accredited and were to start in April 1949. Prior to the start of new-system universities, coeducation at all levels was begun, and women were finally able to access any university and college. Consequently institutions of higher education in prewar Japan were consolidated under one administrative bureau in accordance with accreditation and this bureau sought to insure that women gained a right to enroll in any institutions of higher education.

**Conclusion**

This paper examined the installment of the single-track system and its influence on women's higher education through primary and secondary sources. An important goal of postwar women's higher education reforms was the expansion of educational opportunities for women. The relative success of installing the 6-3-3-4 system seems to be apparent. Beauchamp (1995) stated that "Postwar education provides relatively easy access at most levels; it bases competition for the most elite schools not on the accident of birth but on merit; it provides experiences – academic and nonacademic – that reinforce basic democratic principles; it maintains world-class standards; and, for the most part, it strives to strengthen democratic elements, but within the context of Japanese culture, with its emphasis on achievement and 'community' norms" (p. 84).

According to Tsuchiya (1994), in 1935 only less than 1% of female elementary school graduates enrolled in any kind of higher education. Today, female enrollment in higher education is rapidly increasing; more than 35% of college students are female[4]. Regardless of whether the reform succeeded or not, the 6-3-3-4 system was

[4] The data are referenced from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/toukei/ (2002)

implemented rather quickly and resulted in more equal access. However, there were significant differences between male and female patterns of participation in college junior college (Fujimura-Fanselow, 1989; Moroishi, 1998, February; Uemura, 199 Unfortunately, contemporary Japan continues to face some lingering problems discrimination against women; therefore, further research is needed to shed m lighten the reality of the postwar educational reforms in women's higher education w comparing them to the prewar system that was immersed in a rigid cultural setting. best way to achieve a better understanding of these dynamics is through the stud history. History provides us with a powerful tool to better understand the reality of interrelationship between school and society, its problems and its promises.

[5] Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow is probably the most significant scholar who continues to research this issue.

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